What is claimed is:

1. A method of making an optical fiber preform comprising the steps of:

inserting a first glass rod into a first glass tube;

heating the first glass rod and the first glass tube; and

flowing a carrier gas comprising oxygen and an alkali metal vapor between the first glass rod and the first glass tube wherein the alkali metal vapor comprises an alkali metal selected from the group consisting of K, Na, Li, Cs, Rb, and combinations thereof.

2. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of collapsing the first glass tube onto the first glass rod to form a second glass rod.

3. The method according to claim 2 wherein the second glass rod comprises a peak alkali metal oxide concentration greater than about 0.01 wt. %.

4. The method according to claim 2 wherein the second glass rod comprises a peak alkali metal oxide concentration greater than about 0.1 wt. %.

5. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of removing the first glass rod from the first glass tube.

6. The method according to claim 2 further comprising the step of drawing the second glass rod to form a third glass rod.

7. The method according to claim 5 further comprising the step of forming additional glass on the first glass rod.

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein forming additional glass comprises depositing glass soot.

9. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first glass rod comprises GeO_2.

10. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first glass tube comprises F.

11. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first glass rod in the inserting step comprises less than about 20 ppb by weight OH.

12. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first glass rod in the inserting step comprises less than about 0.05 wt. % chlorine.

13. The method according to claim 6 further comprising the step of forming additional glass on the third glass rod to form an optical fiber preform.

14. The method according to claim 13 further comprising the step of drawing the optical fiber preform into an optical fiber.

15. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of forming additional glass on an inside surface of the first glass tube prior to the inserting step.